

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-61 (canceled).

62. (new) Method for overcapping a bottle of sparkling wine with a cover comprising a head and a skirt,

the sealed bottle of sparkling wine having a neck with an opening therein surrounded by a glass ring, the opening being sealed with a cork having a head which protrudes from the opening and which is secured to the neck with a metal tightening wire, the tightening wire being removably secured under the glass ring and including a wire loop,

comprising the steps of:

providing a cover having a skirt with upper and lower lines of weakness defining an opening strip with a gripping tab at a free end of the strip, the lower line of weakness dividing the cover into an upper portion and a lower portion, and being disposed at a distance H from a top of the cover, distance H corresponding to an axial height between the protruding head of the cork at its top and the glass ring at its bottom,

the skirt having a width L between the upper line of weakness and the lower line of weakness, wherein L is at least $0.5 \times H$; and

overcapping the sealed bottle of sparkling wine with the cover,

wherein pulling on the gripping tab enables removal of the upper portion of the cover, and thereby exposes the loop, the tightening wire and cork to enable opening of the sealed bottle.

63. (new) Method of claim 62, further comprising the steps of providing an additional means being selected from an upper reinforcement means, a lower reinforcement means, a means for fastening all or part of lower part to the neck, and

depositing an upper reinforcement or a lower reinforcement either by bonding a strip according to the mechanical characteristics required, which are resistant to tearing, and of a required shape, which is part of an annular sector, or by using a gun to apply a strip or line of melted plastic material that is adherent and that hardens when applied.

64. (new) Method of claim 63, wherein said upper and lower reinforcement means are a self-adhesive label of suitable shape applied to said arc.

65. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein said gripping tab comprises notches to direct tearing strain when said cover is opened towards said two lines of weakness.

66. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein said gripping tab comprises notches or recesses made in a film or sheet material constituting said cover.

67. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein width L_1 of said tab ranges from 0.5 L to L with L ranging between 1.5 and 4 cm.

68. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein said lower part comprises a lower reinforcement means that increases the mechanical properties of said lower part and adheres to an inner surface of said lower part at least along and parallel to said lower line of weakness, said lower reinforcement further comprising an adhesive layer over a surface that can be activated and that is arranged to adhere to said neck.

69. (new) Method of claim 68, wherein the entire said lower reinforcement comprises a layer that can be activated and constitutes a circular strip the width of which is at least equal to 5 mm and that can extend over all or part of the height of said lower part and that is adjacent to at least the upper edge of said lower part along and parallel to said lower line of weakness.

70. (new) Method of claim 68, wherein all or part of the

said lower part on its inner surface comprises a layer of glue or adhesive as fastening means that can be activated and that constitutes a bonded part that adheres to said neck, optionally after activation.

71. (new) Method of claim 70, wherein said glue or adhesive comprises a complex layer including a layer that adheres to the glass and a layer that adheres to the material comprising the inner surface of said cover, selected from the group consisting of aluminum, paper and a layer of plastic material or varnish.

72. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein said upper part comprises an upper reinforcement means selected to increase the mechanical properties of said upper part such that when said bottle is opened for said first time, said opening strip which is created by pulling on the gripping tab, removes the whole of said upper part along with the gripping tab, and enables said upper line of weakness to be removed by said upper reinforcement means.

73. (new) Method of claim 72, wherein said upper reinforcement means comprises a lateral end that reinforces all or part of said gripping tab.

74. (new) Method of claim 73, wherein said lateral end extends beyond said gripping tab such that said lateral end assumes the role of said gripping tab when the cover is first opened.

75. (new) Method of claim 72, wherein said upper reinforcement means comprises a reinforcement strip or line that includes a lower part or edge adjacent to lower line of weakness.

76. (new) Method of claim 75, wherein said reinforcement means comprises an upper part or edge along the same reinforcement strip, said upper and lower edges being separated by a width L, that is constant or otherwise

depending on angular position α , width L ranging between 0.4 and 4 cm, average width L being between 0.3 and 0.7 times H.

77. (new) Method of claim 76, wherein width L is not constant and increases with the angular position α , width L being at its smallest at said tab where angle α is equal to 0.

78. (new) Method of claim 72, wherein said upper reinforcement means covers the entire interior surface or inner periphery of the free part of said opening strip.

79. (new) Method of claim 72, wherein said upper or lower reinforcement means comprises either a thin sheet or reinforcement strip of a plastic material, paper, or a layer, strip or line of plastic, resin, varnish or paint material.

80. (new) Method of claim 62, wherein, said cover material is selected from the group consisting of Al, Al alloys, Sn, Sn alloys, shrinkable plastic, Al/PO/Al complex multilayers, Al/PO/paper, PO/Al/PO, and charged PO/Al/PO, wherein Al is a layer of aluminum and PO is a layer of polyolefin capable of containing a charge.

81. (new) Method of claim 80, wherein the thickness of said material in sheets or strips ranges between 25 and 50 μm when the material is aluminum or an alloy, between 110 and 150 μm when the material is tin or an alloy, between 60 and 100 μm when the material is a shrinkable plastic film and between 60 and 110 μm when the material is a multilayer material.

____ 82. (new) A sealed bottle of sparkling wine including an easy-to-open overcapping cover, comprising:

- a neck having an opening and a glass ring surrounding the opening;

- a cork sealing the opening and having a protruding head;

- a metal cork wire having a tightening wire fastening the cork to the neck of the bottle removably secured under the glass ring of the neck and further including an opening loop; and

a cover overcapping the cork and neck of the bottle, comprising:

a head and a skirt of a sheet material, said sheet material being selected from the group consisting of aluminum or aluminum alloy of thickness between 25 and 50 μm , tin or tin alloy of thickness between 110 and 150 μm and aluminum and plastic multilayer material of thickness between 60 and 110 μm ;

an easy-to-open means provided on said skirt and including an upper line of weakness and a lower line of weakness, the upper and lower lines of weakness defining an opening strip having a width L, and the upper and lower lines of weakness being substantially parallel and extend substantially around a whole circumference of the cover, the easy-to-open means also comprising a gripping tab disposed at a free end of the opening strip, the gripping tab comprising notches disposed at upper and lower ends thereof to direct tearing of the opening strip during a first opening of the bottle by pulling on the gripping tab and removing the upper part along the lower line of weakness,

the lower line of weakness being located on the cover at a height H from a top of the cover, the height H defining a partition of the cover into the upper part and the lower part,

wherein the lower line of weakness is located with respect to the neck of the bottle such that removal of the upper part after tearing of the opening strip provides access to the loop, tightening wire and the cork, the lower part remaining intact on the neck, and wherein the upper line of weakness is separated from the lower line weakness by a distance L at least equal to 0.5 H.

____ 83. (new) Cover of claim 82, further comprising means for fastening said lower part to said neck, and means for reinforcing said upper part so that when said bottle is

opened, said upper part is removed wholly.

84. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein the gripping tab comprises notches to direct tearing strain when said cover is opened towards said two lines of weakness such that said cover is opened easily, ensuring the remaining lower part of the cover located beneath said lower line stays intact.

85. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein said gripping tab further comprises notches or recesses made in a film or sheet material constituting said cover.

86. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein width L_1 of said tab ranges from $0.5 L$ to L with L ranging between 1.5 and 4 cm.

87. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein said lower part comprises a lower reinforcement means that increases the mechanical properties of said lower part and adheres to an inner surface of said lower part at least along and parallel to said lower line of weakness, said lower reinforcement means comprising an adhesive layer over a surface that can be activated and that is constructed and arranged to adhere to said neck.

88. (new) Cover of claim 87, wherein the entire said lower reinforcement comprises a layer that can be activated and constitutes a circular strip having a width which is at least equal to 5 mm and that can extend over all or part of the height of said lower part and that is adjacent to at least the upper edge of said lower part along and parallel to said lower line of weakness.

89. (new) Cover of claim 87, wherein all or part of said lower part over its inner surface comprises a layer of glue or adhesive as fastening means that can be activated and that constitutes a bonded part that adheres to said neck, optionally after activation.

90. (new) Cover of claim 89, wherein said glue or

adhesive comprises a complex layer including a layer that adheres to the glass and a layer that adheres to the material comprising the inner surface of said cover, selected from the group consisting of aluminum, paper and a layer of plastic material or varnish.

91. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein said upper part comprises an upper reinforcement means selected to increase the mechanical properties of said upper part such that when said bottle is opened for said first time said opening strip, which is created by pulling on gripping tab, removes the whole of said upper part along with it and to enable said upper line of weakness to be removed by said upper reinforcement means.

92. (new) Cover of claim 91, wherein said upper reinforcement means comprises a lateral end that reinforces all or part of said gripping tab.

93. (new) Cover of claim 92, wherein said lateral end extends beyond said gripping tab such that said lateral end assumes the role of said gripping tab when the cover is first opened.

94. (new) Cover of claim 91, wherein said upper reinforcement means comprise a reinforcement strip or line that includes a lower part or edge adjacent to lower line of weakness.

95. (new) Cover of claim 94, wherein said upper reinforcement means comprises an upper part or edge along the same reinforcement strip, said upper and lower edges being separated by a width L, that is constant or otherwise depending on angular position α , width L ranging typically between 0.4 and 4 cm, average width L being between 0.3 and 0.7 times H.

96. (new) Cover of claim 95, wherein said width L is not constant and increases with the angular position α , width L

being at its smallest at said tab where angle α is equal to 0.

97. (new) Cover of claim 91, wherein said upper reinforcement means covers the entire interior surface or inner periphery of the free part of said opening strip.

98. (new) Cover of claim 91, wherein said upper or lower reinforcement means comprises either a thin sheet or reinforcement strip of a plastic material, paper, or a layer, strip or line of plastic, resin, varnish or paint material.

99. (new) Cover of claim 82, wherein said cover material is selected from the group consisting of Al, Al alloys, Sn, Sn alloys, shrinkable plastic, Al/PO/Al complex multilayers, Al/PO/paper, PO/Al/PO, and charged PO/Al/PO, wherein Al is a layer of aluminum and PO is a layer of polyolefin capable of containing a charge.
